

Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments
FY 15 Federal Funding Opportunity FAQs

- **Q1:** The results of each prior research project led by the Principal Investigator(s) during the last three years relevant to the proposed effort should be summarized in brief paragraphs. If we have 4-5 PIs, that seems like it would end up with a much longer list than the two page limit allows.
 - **A1: The FFO states that, for RISA and the SARP NIDIS Center, you only need to list the current and pending support for lead PIs. If you wish to include co-PIs, we recommend that you establish a website where current and pending can be accessed. However, we cannot guarantee that reviewers will access that website.**
- **Q2:** The geographical scope part is unclear. You have a bulleted list of regions, but do not say what it is a list of. For example, for Urban Northeast, are you seeking a proposal for this region? If not, are you excluding a proposal for this region?
 - **A2: We are soliciting proposals for the bulleted list of regions listed in the FFO and Information Sheet. We will not accept proposals for other regions.**
- **Q3:** If two RISAs are applying for the Sustained Assessment Specialist, but intend to share one person across 2 re-competing regions, do they need to submit identical narratives? Can the cost be shared across institutions?
 - **A3: Narratives don't have to be identical, but should be similar. Cost-sharing-- usually it's more straightforward for the RISA award to go to one institution, sometimes there are sub-awards from there, but think about overhead/indirect.**
- **Q4:** Why is there no Mid-Atlantic RISA?
 - **A4: We considered the possibility of competing a Mid-Atlantic RISA. However, given that the Mid-Atlantic would be a new region on top of the existing regions, the possibility was entirely contingent on the additional funds planned in the presidents budget. Unfortunately, we know those funds are not going to be available. So we decided not to lend false impressions.**
- **Q5:** What denotes a “team”. Is it a group of researchers (within a single university or organization) or a group of individuals, institutions or agencies within the region?
 - **A5: RISA teams are largely academically based consortia of multiple institutions with partners in Federal, state, regional, tribal, and local governments. NOAA funding cannot support**

federal salaries, so while RISAs partner with federal agencies, our funding cannot support their participation in the research.

- Q6: Is it possible for various faculty from one university to be on different, competing “teams” either with members within this university or in other combinations with others from other universities or agencies? I am trying to determine if this is indeed a limited call for our university, that is, only one team from our university can submit a proposal.
 - **A6: Researchers from one university may participate in multiple proposals, and one university could be on multiple proposals (e.g. as a lead institution and as an affiliate). However, given the scope and scale of RISA proposals, we encourage you to use the LOI phase to make informed decisions about the merits of submitting multiple proposals.**
- Q7: Does an institution have to be located in the region?
 - **A7: It's not a Yes or No question. In the past, proposals from institutions well outside the region of interest have not reviewed well. However, many of those cases involved people on the opposite end of the US or thousands of miles outside the region. It helps tremendously to have a track record of engagement in and research on the region in question, including institutional partners in the region. Ultimately, reviewers focus on whether the investigator will be able to engage people in the region in person and, on a related note, whether they would be seen as an outsider with passing interest in issues that are very tangible and real.**
- Q8: What is the total page limit for a RISA proposal? And what is included in the page limits? [note: this question arose because there is a discrepancy in the full FFO regarding page limits for RISA vs. for 3 or more investigators for CPO as a whole; the following response pertains to RISA proposals]
 - **A8: The total page limit for RISA proposals is 45 pages. The statement of work including references, figures and the sustained assessment component should be no more than 25 pages. Bios can be short paragraphs and only needed for main investigators if space is an issue. Only lead investigators need to include current and pending support. Letters of support are included in the 45 page limit. Budget tables, budget justifications, and subcontract information are not included in the page count for this competition.**
- Q9: In addition, for those of us who are existing RISAs, may we cite work done by members of our team who are not official PIs in the new proposal? For the prior research section, do we include only research from

the actual group of PIs listed on the proposal, or can we include previous research from the RISA even if the person who lead it is not going to be a named PI on the new proposal? Where is the boundary of whose research is included?

- **A9: The section is explicitly intended to include prior research for the PIs named on the proposal. You can cite previous work of researchers not named as PIs in the project narrative.**
- Q10: 1) Is there any way we can submit a LOI despite having missed the deadline? (I'm assuming no, but thought I'd ask.) 2) Can we submit a proposal despite not having submitted an LOI? 3) If yes to either 1) or 2), is there a time I might talk with one or more of you about or research ideas and obtain some informal feedback?
 - **A10: The deadline to submit LOIs has passed and they can't be submitted late, but technically you can still submit a proposal without going through the LOI stage. We would encourage you to view our webinars that we hosted a few weeks ago on the RISA program and FFO: <http://cpo.noaa.gov/ClimatePrograms/ClimateandSocietalInteractions/RISAProgram/RISAFederalFundingOpportunityFY15.aspx> This may provide more background on the RISA program and the FFO. If, after viewing the webinars, you would still like to chat about your proposal, we would be happy to set up a call.**
- Q11: Would federally funded research and development centers (FFRDC) like DOE Pacific Northwest National Lab be eligible for this call?
 - **A11: Our funding cannot cover federal salaries.**
- Q12: Say engagement with stakeholders results in a request for management or decision support tools that rely upon climate information - eg a maintenance scheduling tool that relies upon short term seasonal forecast. Can our RISA do the research to develop the tool and then help implement it with users ? Say engagement with stakeholders results in a request for management or decision support tools that rely upon climate information -eg a maintenance scheduling tool that relies upon short term seasonal forecast. Can our RISA do the research to develop the tool and then help implement it with users ?
 - **A12: You can propose to help "implement" the tool with users. One thing to consider is who will maintain the tool. We often encourage RISAs to think about long term sustainability (e.g., partnering with an operational entity, extension, NGO, etc., from the start of the design and development of a tool) so that a university doesn't need to sustain a regular product for the long term. That said, RISAs have developed outlooks and**

other products that they maintain and which evolve over time depending on research developments

- Q13 (related to Q12): Can we provide research and tools that relate to weather (i.e. short term events) as well as to climate (eg longer term conditions)?
 - **A13: Our office is interested in supporting work that connects weather to climate but be sure to make the climate connection for the review process.**
- Q14: One question we have is what should be the balance between research and products. For example, say a set of users want a seasonal forecast of a climate parameter that is currently not available from suppliers because it requires research to develop. Our RISA team then carries out the research to develop the product. Can the RISA now also take charge of regularly disseminating the new product thru a website or fora etc ? Or should we hope that the research findings will be disseminated to forecast suppliers (public and private) and they will start disseminating?
 - **A14: We encourage RISAs to develop and disseminate products that provide a service for the region, particularly where they serve a purpose in investigating an overarching research question on the use of climate information. For example, RISAs have effectively used outlook products and fora as part of developing and maintaining an engagement strategy and as part of research on what constitutes timely and credible information. We do, however, encourage RISAs to also look for ways to transition those products to operational endpoints.**
- Q15: Can you give me an idea of how detailed the Data/Information Sharing Plan (Element 5) needs to be? No one on our team is familiar with this requirement from past NOAA Proposals and we want to make sure we adequately fulfilling it.
 - **A15: This is a new NOAA requirement for all NOAA grants. You should address the issues raised in the FFO paragraph on data sharing, but a paragraph or two would be sufficient given the constraints on total page limits.**
- Q16: Are the lead PIs' current and pending docs considered part of the budget pages (and therefore not part of the 45-page limit), or a follow-on to the bio info (and thus part of the 45-page limit)?
 - **A16: PIs' current and pending is considered part of the 45-page limit, but you can use your discretion as to whom you include as PIs (e.g., just the leads are fine).**

- Q17: What is the competition ID number for the RISA competition?
 - **A17: 2488579**
- Q18: How important is it to hit the annual budgets tightly, as opposed to a bit of fluctuation, as long as the 5-year total is under the limit?
 - **A18: For any given year, any amount up to \$700,000 can be proposed for the core RISA component. Anything above that amount per year will lose review points in the cost category for the review criteria. Given the budget outlooks, we said the range would be \$500-700K per year. **The funding for the Sustained Assessment Specialist is separate from the \$700K allowed for the core RISA component per year and an additional \$150-200K of funding is allowed for the SAS****
- Q19: How should applicants fill out the 424A NOAA budget forms for a 5-year RISA proposal?
 - **A19: Complete years 1 through 4 on the first SF-424A. Year 5 will go on the second SF-424A. In addition, in the last column of the second SF-424A, you would insert the totals from all the categories from columns 1-4 on the first SF-424A along with year 5 of the second SF-424A. The totals should be derived from the line item categories, in section B. The categories are travel, personnel, etc.**